

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00

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SSC-01 /086 W

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R 260915Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8041

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 4681

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV MY

SUBJ: RAZAK ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF DZULKIFLI HAJI ABDUL

HAMID AS DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER

REF: A. CANBERRA 6181

B. KL 4593

C. KL 4545

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER ANNOUNCED APPOINTMENT SEP 23 FORMER SABAH ASST CHIEF MINISTER DZULKIFLI HAJI ABDUL HAMID AS DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE "TO HELP" SABAH CHIEF MINISTER TUN DATO MUSTAPHA WHEN HE ASSUMES DEFENSE PORTFOLIO TO WHICH HE HAS BEEN NAMED. END SUMMARY.

2. MALAY-LANGUAGE UTUSAN MALAYSIA GAVE FRONT-PAGE PLACEMENT SEPT 24 TO ANNOUNCEMENT MONDAY BY PRIME MINISTER TUN RAZAK THAT
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SENATOR DZULKIFLI HAJI ABDUL HAMID WILL BECOME DEPUTY

MINISTER OF DEFENSE. RAZAK REPORTEDLY STATED THAT DZULKIFLI WILL ASSIST SABAH CHIEF MINISTER TUN DATO MUSTAPHA IN CARRYING OUT HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS DEFENSE MINISTER. NO MENTION WAS MADE IN THE REPORT OF WHEN MUSTAPHA, WHO CONSTITUTIONALLY HAS TWO YEARS LEFT OF HIS TERM AS CHIEF MINISTER, WILL COME TO KL. TO TAKE OVER THE CABINET POST TO WHICH HE HAS BEEN NAMED.

2. COMMENT: IT IS STILL NOT CLEAR WHETHER MUSTAPHA INTENDS TO MOVE TO KL "AFTER THE END OF THE YEAR" AS TUN RAZAK HAS TOLD LOCAL PRESSMEN, OR WHETHER HE WILL DECLINE TO GIVE UP OR LOOSEN THE HOLD HE HAS OVER AFFAIRS IN SABAH. EMBOFFS HAVE BEEN TOLD BY INFORMED GOM OFFICIALS THAT TUN RAZAK IS CONFIDENT MUSTAPHA WILL TAKE DEFENSE PORTFOLIO. IF HE DOES NOT, IT WOULD ALL TO PLAINLY DEMONSTRATE HIS INDEPENDENCE OF CENTRAL GOVT (REF B).

3. WE SUSPECT MUSTAPHA-RAZAK EXCHANGE PROBABLY MAY HAVE GONE SOMETHING LIKE THIS: BEFORE AUG 24 ELECTIONS, RAZAK SUGGESTED MUSTAPHA TAKE FEDERAL PORTFOLIO BUT DID NOT SPECIFY WHICH ONE. FOLLOWING MALAY CUSTOM, MUSTAPHA INDICATED PLEASURE AT SUGGESTION BUT DID NOT GIVE HIS AGREEMENT. HE WAS DISMAYED TO LEARN SEPT 5 THAT HE HAD BEEN NAMED BY RAZAK TO DEFENSE POST IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW CABINET AND, IN REACTION, TOLD PRESS HE HAD NOT DECIDED WHETHER TO LEAVE SABAH BECAUSE HE IS NEEDED THERE (REF C), ORCHESTRATING THIS WITH PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS URGING HE REMAIN. WHILE IN KOTA KINABALU SEPT 15, RAZAK IS LIKELY TO HAVE REMONSTRATED MILDLY WITH MUSTAPHA, POINTING OUT THAT BECAUSE OF HIS HIGH REGARD FOR MUSTAPHA'S ABILITIES HE HAD GIVEN HIM WHAT IS CURRENTLY THIRD RANKING JOB (AFTER PM AND DEPUTY PM) IN FEDERAL GOVT. PRIME MINISTER ALSO PROBABLY POINTED OUT THAT CABINET POSITION WOULD GIVE MUSTAPHA NEW AND LARGER SCOPE TO EXERCISE HIS ABILITIES AND ARGUED THAT MOVE MIGHT MAKE POSSIBLE A SETTLEMENT OF SOUTHERN PHILIPPINE PROBLEM FAVORABLE TO PHILIPPINE MUSLIMS AND RETURN TO HOMELAND OF FILIPINO REFUGEES IN SABAH, THEREBY ACHIEVING MUSTAPHA'S OWN GOAL.

4. RAZAK SWEETENED THE POT BY ASKING MUSTAPHA TO NAME HIS OWN DEPUTY (THIS POST HAS NOT BEEN FILLED SINCE RITHAUDEEN BECAME MINISTER FOR SPECIAL FUNCTIONS IN AUG 1973 AFTER RAZAK GAVE UP PORTFOLIO TO HAMZAH), WHO PROVED TO BE DZULKIFLI. APPOINTMENT OF LATTER, WHO WILL ASSUME OFFICE IMMEDIATELY, WILL HELP MUSTAPHA

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FEEL MORE SECURE IN NEW JOB. IN ADDITION, THE SABAH CHIEF MINISTER MAY HAVE MADE HIS ARRIVAL CONTINGENT ON SOME CONCRETE ACTIONS BY MARCOS VIS-A-VIS PHILIPPINE MUSLIMS (MUSTAPHA INTIMATE SYED KECHEK TOLD US NEWSMAN LAST WEEK THAT "IT IS TIME FOR MARCOS TO MAKE A MOVE").

UNDERHILL

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